

Itinerary of the Voyage of H. M. S. *Blossom*, 1825 to 1828

BY

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HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP *Blossom* under the command of Captain F. W. Beechey sailed to the Pacific and Arctic Oceans in the year 1825 and remained in that area until 1828 to provide support for an expedition mounted by the British for the purpose of discovering a northwest passage. The ship was scheduled to meet the expedition north of Bering Strait some time during the months of July, August or September of the years 1826 or 1827, and she was ordered to explore, chart and to collect natural history specimens during the balance of the time. Upon her return to England the natural history specimens were distributed to various naturalists for study. The mollusks were entrusted to J. E. Gray and his report on them appeared after numerous delays (GRAY, 1839; see also general introduction by F. W. BEECHEY, pp. vii, viii). In his introduction to the section on Mollusca, Gray remarked that a portion of the *Blossom* collections, mostly that collected by Captain Belcher and presented by him to the Zoological Society, was described by BRODERIP & SOWERBY (1829). Gray mentioned that he was including in his report additional material collected by others from some of the same areas that had been visited by the *Blossom*, but since he seldom named a collector or a precise locality, there is little basis for considering material to be from a source other than that voyage.

Unfortunately, naturalists of that day in many cases refrained from citing an exact locality for a species they were describing. Probably this was not entirely due to carelessness on their part, but often was the fault of collectors who neglected to label specimens properly. Today, this would be as inexcusable error, but at that time it probably seemed just not that important.

While working with the report on the *Blossom* Mollusca, in an attempt to identify certain Indo-Pacific marine mollusks, I found the quality of the locality data to vary considerably. Over 100 new species of mollusks are described in the report and locality information ranges in

precision from none at all to "Pacific" to relatively excellent data such as "Icy Cape." It will be noted that the section completed by G. B. SOWERBY (pp. 143 - 155) often contains considerably better locality information than that which precedes it written by GRAY (pp. 103 to 142). During a brief visit to the British Museum (N. H.) in 1963 I examined some of the types of species described by Gray in his report and found that the museum labels lacked additional locality data.

In many groups of mollusks it is of considerable importance to ascertain with fair precision the locality from which a particular species was described because similar-appearing but distinct species often live in widely separated regions. For this reason type localities are often designated in order to localize a taxon and to remove it from geographical limbo. To provide some basis for type locality designations in a similar case, CHAMBERLAIN (1960) prepared an itinerary of the voyage of the *Venus*. I have prepared the following itinerary of the voyage of the *Blossom*, and I hope it will obviate the necessity for future workers to search the cruise narrative to discover appropriate type localities.

BEECHEY (1831) prepared an elaborate narrative of the voyage of the *Blossom* containing rather complete and fascinating descriptions of the places and peoples visited. Events are related chronologically, but precise dates and places are buried in the text. In order to extract these for an itinerary it was necessary to read the narrative in some detail, a not unpleasant task. Where locality names differ appreciably from those recognized today, I have used either the modern name or indicated it in parentheses. The dates of visitation associated with each locality are not always certain and in some cases had to be left blank. It is often difficult to be sure from the cruise narrative that the ship actually stopped at a locality or whether it merely observed the position of an island or port while sailing past.

Localities	Arrival and/or Departure Dates		
Departed from Spithead, England	May 19, 1825	Nihau, Hawaii	June 1-2
Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Ids.	June 2-5	Petropavlovsk, Bay of Awatska	June 28 to
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	July 11-13	Kamchatka, U. S. S. R.	July 5
Rounded Cape Horn	September 16	Off Bering Island,	
Isla Mocha, Chile	October 6	Commander Islands, U. S. S. R.	July 10
Talcahuano and Concepción, Chile	October 8-20	Off St. Lawrence Island, Alaska	July 16
Valparaíso	October 27-29	Off King Island, Alaska	July 19
Off Sala-y-Gómez	November 15	Diomedes Islands,	
Easter Island	Nov. 17-18?	Bering Strait, U. S. S. R.	July 20
Ducie Island	November 29	Schismareff Inlet, Cape Prince	
Henderson Island	December 3	of Wales, Alaska	July 21
Pitcairn Island	December 5 - 21	Kotzebue Sound, Alaska	July 22-23
Oeno Island	December 23	Chamisso Island, Mouth of	
Gambier Islands	Dec. 28, 1825	Eschscholtz Bay, Alaska	July 25-30
	Jan. 13, 1826	Cape Thompson, Alaska	August 2
Lord Hood's Island		Point Franklin, Alaska	August 15
(Marutea, Tuamotus)	January 14	Between Icy Cape and Cape	
Clermont Tonnerre		Beaufort, Alaska	August 20
(Reao, Tuamotus)	January 18	Point Hope, Alaska	August 26
Serle Island		Return to Chamisso Island	August 28
(Pukarua, Tuamotus)	January 21	Explorations of Kotzebue Sound	
Whitsunday Island		and vicinity while waiting for	
(Pinaki, Tuamotus)	January 22	Captain Franklin and shore party	
Queen Charlotte's Island		(September 10; return of Barge	
(Nukutavake, Tuamotus)	January 23	from north to 71° 23' 31" N and	
Lagoon Island		156° 21' 30" W)	August 29 to
(Vahitahi, Tuamotus)	January 24	King Island, Alaska	October 14
Egmont Island		St. Paul, Pribilof Islands, Alaska	October 16
(Vairaatea, Tuamotus)	January 25?	Unimak, Aleutian Islands, Alaska	October 21
Barrow Island		San Francisco, California	October 22
(Vanavana, Tuamotus)		Monterey, California	November 7 to
Carysfort Island		Honolulu, Hawaii	December 28
(Tureia, Tuamotus)			January 1-5, 1827
Osnaburgh or Matilda		Left Hawaii	January 26 to
(Mururoa, Tuamotus)	February	South of Wake Island	March 3
Byam Martin Island		Assumption (Asuncion, Marianas)	March 4
(Ahunui, Tuamotus)		Bashee Islands (Batanes Islands)	March 15
Gloucester Island		Macao	March 25
(Paraoa, Tuamotus)		Naha, Okinawa, Ryukyu Ids.	April 7
Bow Island		Bonin Islands	April 10-30
(Hao, Tuamotus)	Feb. 15-20	Petropavlovsk, Bay of Awatska	May 18-25
Tahiti, Society Islands	March 18 to	Kamchatka, U. S. S. R.	June 8
	April 26		
Oahu, Hawaii	May 19-31	Bering Island,	
		Commander Islands, U. S. S. R.	July 22
		St. Lawrence Island, Alaska	August 1

King Island, Alaska	August 2	Acapulco, Mexico	March 13-18
Chamisso Island, Kotzebue Sound, Alaska (Lieut. Belcher takes Barge north to explore Icy Cape)	August 5	Crossed Equator	March 29
Cape Krusenstern, Alaska	August 25	Valparaiso, Chile	April 29 - May 20
Chamisso Island, Kotzebue Sound, Alaska	August 26	Coquimbo, Chile	May 23 - June 3
Cape York, Alaska	August 31	Cape Horn	June 30
Exploring north to vicinity of Icy Cape and southward to Port Clarence and return to Kotzebue Sound waiting for Capt. Franklin and shore party	October 6	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	July 21
Passing Bering Strait and in vicinity of St. Lawrence Island, Alaska	October 6-7	Spithead, England	October (prior to 12 th , 1828)
St. Paul, Pribilof Islands	October 12		
Unimak Island, Aleutian Islands	October 14		
Monterey, California	October 29 to November 17		
San Francisco, California	November 18 to December 3		
Off Cape St. Lucas, Baja California, Mexico	December 13		
Off Tres Marias Islands, Mexico	December 14		
San Blas, Mexico	December 16		
Mazatlán, Mexico	February 3 to Feb. 7, 1828		
Exploration of coast between Mazatlán and San Blas	February 7		
Left San Blas, Mexico	March 8		

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